

WHY ARE BATS IMPORTANT

Microbats

Are nature's non-chemical controllers of insect populations.

These small bats will consume up to 40% of their body weight in insects nightly.



The loss of these bats increases the demand for chemical pesticides with disastrous consequences to ecosystems and human economies. In many agricultural and urban areas where habitat destruction has reduced these animals to ineffective numbers, bat boxes are being erected in an attempt to encourage the animals back to the area.

Flying-foxes

Are vital for the regeneration of our native forests.

Their diet consists of nectar, pollen and native fruits from at least 40 eucalypts and other native plants.



Their feeding behaviour results in pollen and seeds being moved many kilometres from the parent tree. This process is important in maintaining the genetic diversity of our forests and can not be performed by birds or bees. Most eucalypts open their flowers after sunset with the maximum amount of nectar being produced at night. The health and long term survival of our native forests depends on the conservation of flying-fox habitat.

AUSTRALIAN BAT LYSSAVIRUS

Contrary to media reports, ABL is the only virus transferred from bats to humans. Both microbats and flying-foxes can transmit this virus. However, less than 1% of bat populations carry the disease. ABL is transmitted through saliva, so you cannot catch this virus unless you are bitten or scratched by an infected animal. If you are bitten or scratched there is an effective vaccine available.

What to do if you encounter a sick or injured bat

- Restrain your domestic animals (cats and dogs) and ensure the bat is not subjected to further disturbance.
- Contact Fauna Rescue SA Bat Hotline.
- A trained and vaccinated rescuer will respond.

What to do if you are bitten or scratched by a bat

- Immediately wash the wound with soap and water. This is the most effective measure for reducing transmission.
- Contact your local doctor or Health Department.
- Inform the person collecting the bat, that you have been bitten or scratched.



BAT HOTLINE
08 8486 1139



Help save our Grey-headed Flying-fox

To make a donation by direct deposit please use **Bat Fund** as reference. Account Name: Fauna Rescue of SA Inc.
BSB: 065 147 Account No: 101 004 93
Or visit <https://www.faunarescue.org.au/donations/>

 Facebook: Bats of Adelaide City

Fauna Rescue of South Australia Inc

AUSTRALIAN BATS

FLYING-FOXES



MICROBATS



BATS

Myth or Fact

There are many myths and misconceptions about bats. Most people have a fear of these animals instilled in them since childhood. This brochure aims to provide some facts about these interesting animals, their environment and potential disease problems.

- Bats are the only mammals capable of true flight.
- Bats are placental mammals like humans, giving birth to a fully developed young.
- Bats are exceptionally vulnerable to extinction as they are the slowest reproducing mammal for their size, most producing only one young annually.
- There are over 1100 species of bats worldwide, representing one quarter of all mammal species.
- Vampire bats are only found in Central and South America, weighing 35grams.
- Bats are fastidiously clean animals. Their distinctive smell comes from their scent glands.
- Bats are night feeders (nocturnal).
- Bats do not attack people or get tangled in your hair.
- Bats belong to the Order Chiroptera meaning “hand-wing”. Their wing is a modified hand.

Bats are in rapid decline due to habitat loss

Many species are endangered and listed as vulnerable to extinction

ARE ALL BATS THE SAME?

No

There are two Sub-orders “Microchiroptera” and “Megachiroptera” put more simply insectivorous bats (microbats) and flying-foxes (megabats).

Microbats

There are 70 species of microbats found in Australia. These bats are small and fit in the palm of your hand. Adults range in size from 4g to 150g (average 15g).



Microbats catch insects and navigate in the dark by using echo-location.

High frequency sound pulses inaudible to humans are emitted through the nose or mouth.

Echoes reflect back to the bats allowing them to recognise the position of objects and food.

Microbats roost in caves, rock crevices, tree hollows and under bark. Destruction of old growth forests in which tree hollows are found, has forced these bats to roost in many man made structures: roofs, wall cavities, telephone junction boxes, splits in fence posts, are some examples.

During the day to conserve energy, microbats go into torpor: a state of inactivity when their heart rate slows and body temperature drops. During the winter months when insects are scarce microbats hibernate.



Flying-foxes

Flying-foxes are the largest of the megabats. The four Australian mainland species are: Grey-headed, Black, Spectacled and Little Red Flying-fox. They are distributed primarily along the Australian coast to the north and east. The Little Red Flying-fox can also be found inland throughout NSW, QLD and the NT.

However due to a severe and prolonged starvation crisis throughout their normal range a colony of Grey-headed flying-foxes now resides permanently in South Australia.

Adult flying-foxes range in size from 300g to 1kg, with a wingspan up to 1.6 metres.

Flying-foxes do not echo-locate, they find their food by sight and smell.

Although flying-foxes are often referred to as “fruit bats” the main component of their diet is nectar and pollen from our flowering eucalypts.

Flying-foxes roost in large numbers during the day in the canopy of our forests. These groups are known as camps or colonies. Flying-foxes are highly mobile animals who follow the blossoming of our native trees throughout their range. They do not go into torpor, nor do they hibernate.

The Little Red Flying-fox births in April/May. The other three species give birth to their single young in October/November. The young are born fully furred and carried by their mother, they do not have a pouch.

